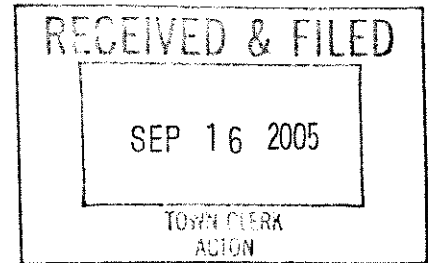


**Town of Acton
Economic Development Committee
Minutes
March 17, 2005**



Attendees:

Rheta Roeber
Phil Janus
Bob Johnson
Herman Kabakoff
Chris Pappas
Lauren Rosenzweig
Edmund Starzec
Roland Bartl

1. Housekeeping

Chairperson Rheta Roeber asked for a motion to approve the draft minutes from the previous meeting. Lauren Rosenzweig moved the question, which was seconded by Herman Kabakoff. The motion passed unanimously.

2. "Life After NESWC" Process

David Stone provided an update on the "Life After NESWC" (LAN) process. Mr. Stone provided the commission with background information on the existing contract with NESWC, the need to properly cap the landfill with an impermeable membrane, and the Request for Proposal (RFP) process that the LAN committee undertook to identify potential reuses for the landfill site. He stated that the cost of recapping the landfill could range between \$3 million and \$5 million, depending on whether gas collection would be needed. The Town has a capping fund with a balance of approximately \$3 million. Dickinson, a real estate development company who has developed similar landfill sites, submitted the only conforming response to the RFP, for a 200,000 square foot Home Depot and an attached 65,000 square foot grocery store.

Herman Kabakoff asked if the EDC should have been more proactive about taking part in the RFP process and could this have avoided the current level of public concern with the issue. David Stone responded that the RFP was very open-ended and did not steer developers towards "big box" type projects in any way. Lauren Rosenzweig noted that she was not aware that the LAN was being formed and asked how it was formed. Bob Johnson replied that it was formed with members of the Finance Committee, ACES, and the League of Women Voters.]

David Stone stated that the committee should consider the opportunity cost of building soccer fields, for example, on the landfill site. The RFP was left open to a range of uses including uses that would require a change in zoning because if the town was to sell the

site, the new user would have to be able to justify paying enough for the site to cap it properly.

There followed some discussion on the distribution of the RFP. Thirty organizations requested copies of the document and a well-attended bidders conference was held.

Lauren Rosenzweig asked if any public meetings were held around the RFP process. She added that e-mail should not be a forum for public discussion. Bob Johnson explained that e-mail communication was appropriate as long as it does not include deliberation.

Rheta Roeber and Herman Kabakoff asked how can the EDC become a more active participant in this and other similar issues. Additional outreach to other boards and commissions was identified as the best tactic.

Lauren Rosenzweig asked if we could continue the NESWC contract. David Stone responded yes, the contract could be renegotiated. Ms. Rosenzweig asked if the capped landfill could it be used for DPW expansion. Mr. Stone indicated that portions of the site could be appropriate for landfill expansion. Ms. Rosenzweig added that it is not well known that the NESWC Enterprise Fund is available to pay for the cap.

Bob Johnson briefly outlined the upcoming public information process prior to a June 13th Town Meeting. There followed some discussion of potential impacts of the Dickinson proposal on the town. Rheta Roeber emphasized the potential impacts on town character. Bob Johnson agreed, noting that while the proposal is clearly favorable in financial terms, the finances must be weighed against issues like town character, traffic flow on Route 27, and cut through traffic in surrounding neighborhoods,

3. 40B Overview

Town Planner Roland Bartl provided the EDC with an overview of Chapter 40B. Roland explained that in communities with less than 10% affordable housing, developers proposing projects incorporating an affordable component are eligible to apply for a comprehensive permit, which is generally immune to zoning and other conditions that might make a project "uneconomic". There followed some discussion of the feasibility of mixed-use projects under 40B, the involvement of non-profit entities in development teams, and questions as to how towns like Lincoln and Carlisle have addressed 40B.